

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 15 April 2009
Conference B, Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Robert Dahn, Peter Drzewiecki, Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander. *Members absent:* Joan Stevenson, Frank Trainor. *Others present:* Grant Meitzler (Wetlands Agent).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:35p by Chair Quentin Kessel.

2. The **agenda** was altered to begin with **aquifer protection**. The Commission is on record as urging additional protection for stratified drift aquifers in Mansfield, which perhaps would take the form of new regulations governing development within 300 ft of such aquifers. Kessel met with Town Planner Greg Padick on Tuesday about this. Padick doubts that sweeping new regulations are needed, since most such aquifers are now covered by 2-acre residential zoning and (in his view) single-family homes do not pose a threat to them. Additionally, subdivision regulations and special permit requirements contain provisions that might be strengthened to further protect stratified drift aquifers. He also believes that new regulatory responsibilities might be a tough sell to the PZC and suggests that fairly minor additions to current zoning and subdivision regulations would suffice to give aquifer protection more prominence in PZC decision-making. Kessel asked Commission members to look over Padick's suggested additions before the May meeting and to consider whether they do in fact seem adequate to address our concerns.

3. The draft **minutes of the 18 March 09 meeting** were approved as written.

3. IWA business.

a. Lehmann participated in the **IWA field trip** earlier in the day; his report is attached.

a. **W1425 (Stonemill Rd. bridge)**. The bridge over the Fenton at the Gristmill is in poor condition and needs to be retired; its double-arch concrete replacement would be slightly wider and longer. Silander questioned the need for a bigger bridge on a road that carries very little traffic and wondered if a wooden replacement had been considered. Meitzler replied that a wooden structure would be more expensive and less durable, and that state money is not available for a more modest structure. The Commission (1) agreed unanimously (motion; Drzewiecki, Silander) that the project should have no lasting impact on wetlands, assuming that appropriate sedimentation control measures are employed during construction (and that an Atwoodville-style fiasco will be avoided here), but (2) regrets that the proposed replacement is wider than necessary.

b. **W1426 (Hallock, Wormwood Hill Rd.)** A 3-lot subdivision is proposed for a (now) lightly wooded parcel on the E. side of Wormwood Hill Rd. near its junction with Rt. 89. The DAE for lot 2 would allow the septic system to be located even closer to the

wetland to the S. than now shown; the septic system for lot 3 appears to be closer than necessary to this same wetland. The Commission (1) agreed unanimously (motion: Drzwiecki, Silander) that wetland impact would be minimized by moving the septic system closer to the house on lots 2 and (particularly) 3, but (2) is disappointed to see yet another application that exploits the common driveway clause without delivering clustered development.

c. W1427 (Hartley, Crane Hill Rd.) The proposed gazebo has already been constructed, so the Commission saw no need to comment.

d. W1428 (Ponde Place, Northwood Rd.) The applicant proposes to drill test wells in the NW portion of the parcel to determine if there is enough water for a large apartment complex; a wetlands permit is required because drilling equipment would be brought in on a woods road at the end of Northwood Rd. that is flanked by wetlands. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (motion: Drzwiecki, Silander) that (1) moving equipment in and out is unlikely to have a significant impact on wetlands, as long as silt barriers are installed as indicated, but that (2) other concerns about this project should be addressed:

- Testing will involve pumping a large volume (45K gpd) of water for a number of days. What is going to happen to this water? There is a potential for erosion if it is simply dumped down the steep slope toward Nelson Brook.
- Draw-down of groundwater from testing will produce a “cone of depression” that may limit the output of other wells in the area.
- Recent testing of wells along Hunting Lodge Rd. which are no longer used reveals less contamination from chemicals in the old UConn landfill than formerly, presumably because contaminated water from the landfill is no longer replacing water that is drawn from them. Drawing a lot of water from the test wells could reverse this trend, leading to contamination of other wells in the area.

e. W1429 (Exxon, CVS at 4 Corners) DEP is requiring Exxon to pay for groundwater purification on an old gas station site now occupied by CVS at 4 Corners. A trench will be dug around along Rts. 44 and 195 to collect groundwater, which will then be treated, discharged into a storm sewer, and released to a wetland across Rt. 44. Since this is a DEP- mandated remediation, there does not appear to be reason for the Commission to comment.

5. Rainbarrel Garden project. The Town Manager has asked if Commission would agree to be listed as a sponsor of a rainbarrel garden talk/workshop later this spring. This is OK by us.

6. Adjourned at 9:05p.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary
16 April 09; approved 20 May 09

Attachment: Report on 15 April 09 IWA field trip

W1427 (Hartley, 72 Crane Hill Rd). A *fait accompli*: the proposed gazebo has been constructed and the Town is collecting its \$155 permit fee. No apparent impact of significance on wetlands: the gazebo is separated from a large pond by an earthen berm; another small wetland at the edge of the road is about 80 ft away down a very gradual slope.

W1426 (Hallock, Wormwood Hill Rd 1/2 mile from Rt. 89). A 3 lot subdivision is proposed for a wooded parcel (thoroughly logged a few years ago) on the E. side of the road. The house on Lot 1 is about 50 ft from a small wetland on adjoining property to the N. The septic system on Lot 2 is about 100 ft uphill from a wetland; the DAE runs parallel to this wetland about 50 ft uphill from it. The septic system on Lot 3 is about 50 ft uphill from the same wetland; I don't see why it can't be moved closer to the house and out of the drainage for this wetland.

According to Greg Padick, IWA/PZC approval of a lot does *not* require that construction actually conform to the plan submitted – house & septic can go anywhere in an approved DAE unless special conditions are attached. I would suggest requiring that the septic system on Lot 2 not be sited any closer to the wetland than shown on this plan, and that the system on Lot 3 be located not lower than the 328 ft contour.

W1425 (Town of Mansfield, Stonemill Bridge). The existing bridge over the Fenton R. at the Gristmill needs to be replaced. A slightly longer double-arch concrete bridge with a narrower central pier is proposed; the river would be slightly less constricted than it is at present, and the new bridge would be a considerable aesthetic improvement. Water pumped out of coffer dams during construction would be directed to the field S. of Stonemill Rd, not dumped directly back into the river.

W1429 (Exxon, CVS site at 4 corners). Groundwater contaminated with gasoline additives will be pumped from wells on the site, treated, and discharged (via a DOT storm sewer) into a wetland N. of Rt. 44. The groundwater remediation process will be overseen by DEP, which one hopes can be trusted to assure that impact on wetlands is minimal.

W1428 (Ponde Place, Northwood Rd). The (would-be) developer is seeking permission to drill test wells to determine if enough water is available for the project. The test sites are in the NW portion of the parcel; drilling equipment would be brought in over the woods road that extends from Northwood toward Carriage House Apts. This road is flanked by wetlands, hence the application. Silt barriers would be placed along this road. Wetland impact from this phase will probably be minimal. However, 3 of the test wells are down a relatively steep slope and getting heavy equipment down to them could lead to erosion. The map does not show enough of the adjacent area to judge whether wetlands might be affected by it.

According to Greg Padick, there is now an EA for this project, but I have not seen it.